

**ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)  
COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT GROUP (D1)**

**PROPOSAL FOR A COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE TO REDUCE  
FATALITIES, INJURIES AND ILL HEALTH IN ARBORICULTURE AND  
FORESTRY USING INSURANCE BROKERS**

**OBJECTIVE**

1. To reduce the high accident rate resulting in injuries and fatalities in the arboricultural and forestry sectors through:
  - Raising awareness among contractors and insurance brokers of the benefits of training, certificates of competence, compliance with and knowledge of legislation.
  - Raising awareness among contractors of required standards and penalties for non-conformance with industry best practice and legislation.
  - Providing points of contact and sources of further information regarding training providers and trade bodies.

**BACKGROUND**

2. Due to the nature of the industry, tree work companies are generally small and tend to be very insular, working to an “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” rule. Contractors in both arboriculture and forestry sit in two distinct camps – those that do comply with current legislation and those that don’t. There will always be a hardcore who will not be influenced and we must accept that those who neither insure, nor show any interest in self-regulation, are unlikely to be receptive to any approach.
3. Where a contractor is a member of a trade body or association, there is already a method of communication through newsletters and magazines. This proposal concentrates on reaching those contractors who do insure, or who seek to insure, through communication via the insurance broker.

**PROPOSALS**

5. There are currently six or seven main brokers providing PI and EL cover and these are in direct communication with the contractor. These brokers (and the relevant underwriters) need to be informed of current legal requirements and good (industry) practice. It is anticipated that they will in turn promote and improve standards and seek evidence of training and competence from their contractor clients.
6. A Safety and Health Awareness Day (SHAD) would be an effective way to inform representatives of the major companies involved in insuring this sector by demonstrating current standards, best practice and the (economic) benefits of

training/competence. This should be held asap (in 2007?). Relevant brokers and underwriters to be identified and invited.

7. Case studies to be presented at the proposed HSE/Lantra Conference for the Insurance and Finance industry, to promote recognition of training and competence by the insurers. Relevant brokers and underwriters to be identified and invited.

8. Brokers to be encouraged to include a communication from HSE/AFAG with their annual renewals sent to contractors. [From date of SHAD?] The messages should include information regarding current industry best practice and updates on legislation and training, as well as emphasising the potential penalties for non-compliance. Topics to be covered, trade bodies and other organisations to be contacted, and sources of help & information are listed in the attached Appendix

## **EVALUATION**

9. Measurement will be subjective but could include feedback from training providers and brokers, uptake of various leaflets, and the response to the SHAD, etc.

## **NEXT STEPS**

10. AFAG Committee / Communications Project Group members to discuss, refine and agree this proposal.

11. If approval is obtained, responsibilities for moving initiative forward to be allocate, including negotiations with insurance brokers (eg Algarve, Bryant Kesek, Barry Grainger, Trust, Cambeford Law, NFU) and appropriate underwriters.

12. Endeavour to obtain sponsorship for a SHAD, at a suitable location. To be discussed through contacts at AFAG/AIAC and in the industry.

**Bruce Hatton**  
**June 2006**

**ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN COMMUNICATION**

**Guidance on Regulations / Best Practice, including:**

Working at Height  
PPE  
LOLER  
PUWER  
COSHH  
HAVS  
Noise Regs/Exposure  
First Aid  
Risk Assessment  
AFAG Best Practice Guides

**Details of Trade Bodies / Sources of Help & Information**

NPTC  
Lantra Awards  
Forestry Commission  
HSE (incl details of Infoline, website, etc)